



1st YEAR ANNIVERSARY PROGRAMME

BRISTOL ROVERS WOMEN'S



FEATURING

SEASON REVIEW, NATHAN HALLETT-YOUNG, JAMIE-LEIGH
WORLOCK, JESS LUMBER, LOTTIE WEEKS, BRISTOL ROVERS
SUPPORTERS CLUB & THE 'GAS GIRLS' AT ST. GEORGE'S PARK



B24/7



BRISTOL ROVERS WOMEN'S



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BRISTOL ROVERS WOMEN'S



COURTNEY ADAMS
JEN ATHERTON
LIBBY BELL
JASMINE BULL
ESME BUNTING
GEORGINA BURGESS
CHLOE CAMPBELL
NATALIE COLES
ZOE FIELDEN-STEWART
SHANNON FRANCIS
NATASHA GALPIN
ROSIE HALL
SHAWNA HANNAM
LAUREN HARRIS
SARAH HARRIS
ANNA HUBBLE
EMILY HULBERT
JOISE JAMES
RHIANNA JAMIESON
ZOE JONES
FREYA JONES-GRIFFITHS
CHEYENNE LEE
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HANNAH THOMPSON
GEORGIA VANDRIES
RUBY WARDEN
POPPY WARREN
LOTTIE WEEKS
SOPHIE WHITEFORD
JAMIE-LEIGH WORLOCK

BRISTOL ROVERS WOMEN'S

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& CO-FOUNDER**
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**FIRST TEAM MANAGER
& CO-FOUNDER**
NATHAN HALLETT-YOUNG

DEVELOPMENT TEAM MANAGER
ABBIE JONES

DEVELOPMENT TEAM ASSISTANT
WILL DIXON

MATCH PHOTOGRAPHERS
RICH BUCHANAN
TOM MEADOWCROFT



@GasGirlsWFC



#UTGG #GasGirls



“FOOTBALL IS THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THE LESS IMPORTANT THINGS IN THE WORLD”

Who would have thought that 365 days after the official re-launch of Bristol Rovers Women's, that we would all find ourselves in the current situation that's affecting the World. The Covid-19 Pandemic has forced us all to make significant changes to our daily lives and of course it has impacted on the game that we all love.

We can't continue without thanking the incredible workers at the NHS and what all of the key workers are doing on a daily basis to help the country function. Some of the girls in our squads are an integral part of this work force and we are really proud of what they are all doing at this unprecedented time. Of course, we hope that they stay safe and our thoughts are with everyone who is affected by the Coronavirus.

It may seem a little inappropriate to chat about football during times like these, but it

was Carlo Ancelotti who once said, “Football is the most important of the less important things in the World”, and he's right. I didn't realise how much I'd miss it and I know that the girls are itching to get that blue & white shirt on and cross over the white line again.

So, before we look back on our inaugural season, let's give you an update on where things stand for the 'Gas Girls'. On Thursday 26th March, to my surprise, we were notified that our season was instantly cancelled, and the League would be declared null & void. I think I had to read the email 3 times just to make sure that what I was reading, was correct. Then I had the arduous task of notifying the girls in both squads.

Naturally we were all gutted, disappointed and frustrated, however I was pleased to see an intent and an eagerness to pick up where we left off and work harder than ever to...



improve for next season. This was exactly the response I wanted to see. As it stands, we will be in the Gloucestershire County Women's League next season, but the League committee are keen on completing the Gordon Perrett League Cup before the start of next season (If it is safe to do so). We are currently scheduled to play Pucklechurch away in the semi-final with the hope of meeting Cheltenham in the Final. I fully commend the League committee for their efforts to keep this competition going, especially when there are only two fixtures to complete. Let's hope that the situation improves for us to battle for silverware at the earliest opportunity.

One year on and despite the scenario we currently face, I couldn't be more proud of what we've all achieved. The girls are brilliant to work with and they've really bought into the culture and ethos that we set out from day one with an emphasis on fun and professionalism. On the pitch? Well, the results speak for themselves.

Whether it was the nerves at our very first friendly away at my old patch in Merthyr, our first competitive match away to Abbeymead, our first home game at Lockleaze and the incredible 7-0 victory against Forest Green Rovers, watching our Development Team players step up during the season and watching us continually improve, it has been

an absolute blast.

We have experienced a few precarious periods during matches, but I have to say we have been a joy to watch throughout the season and I'm sure the fans would agree. We're still learning however, and I look back on this first season with a great sense of pride and thank all of the girls and the amazing staff that I work with for their efforts. It's a shame that you won't be fully rewarded for your hard work.

I also have to thank our fantastic sponsors, partners and friends who have all bought into what the 'Gas Girls' are all about. We're in contact with Bristol Rovers Supporters Club on a very regular basis and I'm delighted to say that they're thoroughly behind us. Brunel Group have given us the opportunity to fund some of our free football sessions for young girls in the area, a true community partnership. We have a superb relationship with Lockleaze Sports Centre, Bob from Ahimsha Yoga attends virtually all of our games to cheer on the girls and will be hosting more yoga sessions for us next season. Crossed Swords 1883 are also regular attendees and are helping us with a project behind the scenes (Did someone say 'Gas Girls' merchandise?).

Bristol 24/7 are also helping us to spread our...



message while Anytime Fitness have supplied the girls with warm-up tops. Without these contributions, we simply won't be able to function as we aspire to be. We cannot thank you enough.

What now? Well, with no football on the horizon (as of yet) it's given us an opportunity to plan ahead for next season and beyond. Our staffing structure has increased considerably since our last match, with the view of efficiently assisting our players in different aspects of the game and taking us to the next step.

Paul Mason, a qualified personal trainer joins us as 'Fitness Coach' and has already developed an out of season fitness programme for the whole squad. Javier Gorodi has come on board as club analyst and looking at the work he's producing, it's going to make a huge difference in our development programmes. Lottie Weeks will be working alongside First-Team Manager, Nathan Hallett-Young as his Assistant while the two of them study for their UEFA B license. There could also be a couple of more roles being filled in the coming weeks which will help us to work on other elements of the club behind the scenes. Without the passion and the effort put in by the whole team, we simply would not be able to progress in the way that we see fit.

Another big shout out goes to our club photographers, Rich Buchanan and Tom Meadowcroft, who have offered their time and their skills to take the great photos that we see online and in this programme. I know how much time this can take so their efforts do not go unnoticed.

As for myself, I now have the opportunity to focus more on our media & marketing activity, working closer with fans, developing a youth system, helping the coaching staff with recruitment decisions and growing the club as a whole.

There are so many things that excite me about this Club. Its potential is evident. What's been my highlight? There are so many but to receive a message from some very happy parents, telling me that their daughter absolutely loved meeting our players and that they now have positive role models to look up to, is what makes this all worthwhile. Let's hope that we're able to do it all again very soon.

Stay safe everyone! UTGG!

Matthew Davies (Mavis)
Co-Founder, Secretary, Media Manager



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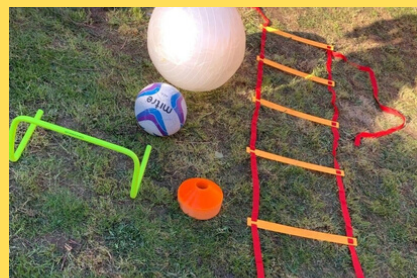
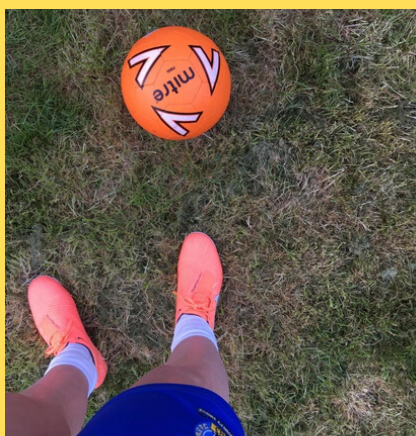
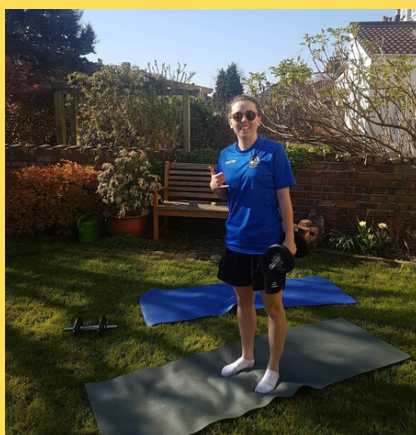
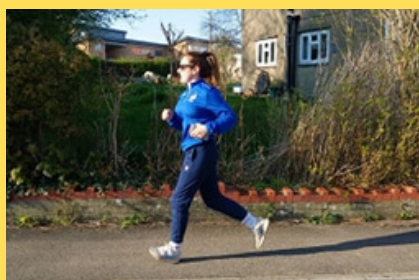


NEWS FLASH!

The club are delighted to announce that Paul Mason is joining the back room staff as our designated fitness coach with immediate effect.

As a fully qualified personal trainer and nutritionist, Paul has already been hosting live workout sessions during lockdown and will be preparing 12-week programmes for the squad during the off-season.

Welcome on board Paul!



The season may be over but lockdown life hasn't stopped our girls from keeping with their daily exercises. As a squad, we've reached an incredible distance of 1,990km, which is the equivalent of Bristol to Budapest . Superb effort!



NATHAN HALLETT- YOUNG

It's been a whirlwind of a 12 months since the 'Gas Girls' officially launched this time last year. As Co-Founder and First Team Manager, Nathan Hallett-Young has been working tirelessly behind the scenes to make sure that Bristol Rovers Women's are setting the highest standards possible to help us progress in the future.

The season may not have concluded in the way we all expected but the work doesn't stop now as we spoke to Nathan who continues his preparations for the next campaign

GG: Hi Nathan. Let's address the elephant in the room first of all. How frustrating was it to hear that our season had been declared null and void??

NHY: Very frustrating, everyone involved with the club have put so much effort in this season, the girls had been excellent on and off the pitch and deserved to be rewarded as league champions. Being unbeaten and only needing 2 points from a possible 12 to be crowned champions showed everyone how good we were and it was incredibly gutting for the season to end this way, however the safety and well-being of our wider community and the country is more important than football right now.

GG: It's been a year since we officially launched the Club. It's fair to say it's flown by. How do you feel when you look back on what has been achieved??



NHY: I have a massive sense of pride seeing where the club is today. So much effort had been put in behind the scenes to get to where we are now. A driving factor to the reforming of the club was to raise female participation within our community, we've exceeded massively with this and every target we have set, the future is really looking bright for us.

GG: Teething problems are natural when a new Club is formed but what has been the biggest challenge to date?

NHY: I think the transition between the two squads, with development players coming in to the first team this season and a minor difference in preferred playing style with both myself and Abbie, can be a little difficult for players to adapt to quickly, however this is something we're aware of and working on to improve for next season.

GG: We're currently in the process of laying the foundations for the Club for the years to come and one of those elements will be our "Philosophy". How would you describe our culture and playing style?

NHY: We implemented a commitment - based culture within the club from the off, outlining the values and the standards of a 'Gas Girl'.

This has really benefited us with keeping very high standards on and off the pitch. Our playing style can be described as a possession style of attacking with varied and unpredictable team and individual play. Personally, I think the girls have really taken to our philosophy and enjoy playing the gas girls way as we're always looking to take the game to our opponents.

GG: Out of all of the victories, which match was probably the most enjoyable this season?

NHY: Forest Green in the GFA County Cup, for multiple reasons. It was our first home game, our first chance to show our fans what we're all about and the girls really did me proud. As a manager it's not often you can relax during a game however this was an exception as everything was perfect. I often refer to it as our pinnacle of performance for this season as the patterns and interplay was a joy to watch.

GG: There's plenty of planning going on behind the scenes already, in preparation for next season and beyond. What's currently in the pipeline?

NHY: I think with the season ending the way it did, we all felt a little down that we couldn't deliver the silverware to our fans...

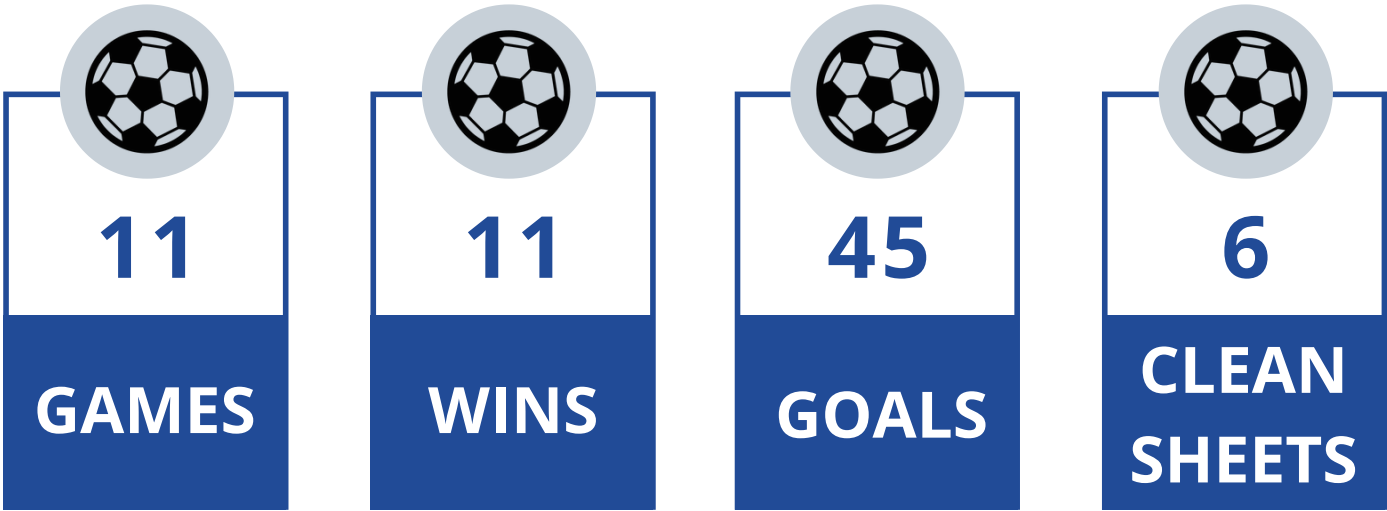
that we wanted, however we've picked ourselves up and realised that this is a good opportunity for us to continue to develop and get a leg up on the competition next season. We've had a brilliant season however this is now the benchmark for us to go and better ourselves, we're working on various different things to improve the club on and off the pitch, so watch out because we're going to be flying out of this isolation period.

GG: There have been plenty but what has been your biggest highlight this season?

NHY: Although we've had brilliant score lines and so many successful games I think my biggest highlight of the season is how the squad has grown to be such a tight knit group. We're like a family and it has really shown when we're on the pitch, despite what's going on, we stick together and come out in the best position.



FIRST TEAM – KEY LEAGUE STATS



TOP SCORERS (LEAGUE & CUP)

GEORGIA VANDRIES	17
ROSSANA ROCHA	14
LIBBY BELL	11

SEASON REVIEW



**OFF THE RECORD
"BUT WHAT A SEASON!"**



WORDS BY JACK DAVIES

The season may have ended in sudden and cruel fashion but the first season of the 'Gas Girls' is still one to celebrate with immense pride. Rovers notched up a 100% record in their 11 league games, scoring 45 goals, only conceding 6 and were firmly champions elect before the postponement and subsequent cancellation of the season.

SEPTEMBER

With only a few weeks of preparation and only a couple of months after formation - Bristol Rovers Ladies began their inaugural Gloucestershire County Division 1 campaign with a 5-0 away victory against Abbeymed at the start of September. Hannah Thompson crashed home the club's first ever goal and the rout was complete with a Rossana Rocha goal sandwiched between a pair of braces for Thompson and Libby Bell. A week later the early threat and promise was even more prominent following an 8-1 win away to Longlevens as Thompson went one better, grabbing a Hat-trick alongside teammate Jen Atherton, who also earned a share of the match ball.

Rovers first true tricky test was away to Bristol Ladies Union and a roundabout affair ended in the Gas Girls notching their 3rd successive win, coming through 4-3 including a crucial goal for Jamie-Leigh Worlock, another for Thompson and a further double for Rocha. A perfect first month was completed in equally dominant fashion with goals for Jasmine Bull, Georgia Vandries and Anna Hubble saw Rovers end September with a 3-0 win away to Bristol and West.

Pics: Top (Hannah Thompson bags the first competitive goal for the 'Gas Girls')

Pics: Middle (Jamie-Leigh Worlock celebrates her first goal of the season against Bristol Ladies Union)

Pics: Bottom (Anna Hubble opens the scoring away to Bristol & West)



NOVEMBER

After a short Autumnal break featuring cup success, Rovers had an early November trip to Cheltenham U21s, their fifth consecutive away game! Tricky conditions halted an early entertainment before a crucial last minute first half goal from Worlock broke down a stubborn home team before the Gas opened the floodgates in the second half, scoring three further including a brace for Vandries.

Three months after the season began, Rovers finally cut the ribbon on their first ever home game. Raptures of support from the Lockleaze Social balcony roared the Gas Girls to a 3-0 victory over Pucklechurch. Rocha's brace and Bell's late goal showed the home support exactly what they had to look forward to!



DECEMBER

In their final game before Christmas, Rovers flirted with their first dropped league points away to Longwell Green before an extremely late Shannon Francis header snatched all three points and the instant home game with Longwell ended with another win, this time by a more comfortable three goals, including a first for captain Natalie Coles, ending a glorious first half of the season, collecting twenty four points from twenty four.



Pics: Top (Libby Bell bends her free-kick into the top corner to put the 'Gas Girls' in front against Pucklechurch Sports)

Pics: Middle (Rossana Rocha compliments her team mates as the Portugese forward nets her second against Longwell Green)

Pics: Bottom (The post-match squad huddle after the 3-0 victory at home to Longwell Green)



JANUARY

Another year rolled around but it was the same old Rovers, who repeated their 5-0 away dismantling of Abbeymead from the opening day by registering another 5-0 victory in the reverse fixture, further goals for Rocha, Libby and Jess Lumbar. A home walkover victory was handed to Rovers by Longlevens before the Country is hit by horrendous storms, causing havoc to the football calendar.

FEBRUARY

The girls did manage to squeeze in a fixture in amongst the barrage of poor weather. After a convincing 12-0 victory against Cotswold Rangers in the Gordon Perret League Cup, Rovers travelled to a damp Longwell Green to book their spot in the semi-final. Despite the tricky conditions the 'Gas Girls' turned on the style and hammered six past the hosts, with goals coming Rocha, a double brace from Thompson and Vandries and an own goal.



MARCH

What would prove to be the final league game of the season, saw a rampant home performance, where despite going a goal down for the first time at home, Rovers would score EIGHT unmatched goals. Including a hat-trick for Bell and four for Vandries. Rovers would be forced to relinquish an all but confirmed league title and miss a cup final but their first ever season was one to be incredibly proud of and will no doubt be cause for extreme optimism in what is firmly expected to be similar if not more dominant season next time around. Gas Girls - unbeaten, untouchable and champions in all but name.



Pics: Top (Bell puts Rover in front against Abbeymead)

Pics: Middle (A mud soaked Longwell Green)

Pics: Bottom (Celebrations at home to Bristol & West)



OUR FANS!



Throughout the season we've been amazed by the support from our fans.

Our aim as a football club is to engage with our fan base and inspire the next generation of girls to play and support women's football. We're delighted to see the amount of interest there is in the 'Gas Girls' and we will be working hard to improve the match day experience for families and all fans as best we can during the break.

Thank you for your incredible support!





JAMIE-LEIGH WORLOCK

Just after the season was declared null & void, She Kicks Magazine journalist Wilf Frith spoke to Jamie-Leigh Worlock who featured on the She Kick's website, one of the best sites to get your women's football news.



We spoke with Bristol Rovers attacking midfielder Jamie-Leigh Worlock (23), whose side were set to clinch the Gloucestershire League title before the pandemic left their season null and void. The campaign had seen the Gas Girls return to open-age football and their first team's success was all but matched by the Development side who led the County League Division 2.

SK: Can you tell us a little of your footballing history and any personal high points?

JLW: I started playing when I was 12 joined St Valliers but then had to leave due to nearly being 13 and no longer being able to play as a mixed team. I had a year out and got back into football by joining the school team and then being asked by the Stoke Lane manager to go training for them and then decided to sign on. After a few years, unfortunately the team folded so I went and joined Almondsbury Ladies for three or four seasons. Bristol Rovers Women was then formed and although it was a hard decision to make, I left Almondsbury to join the Gas Girls and I believe it was definitely the right decision! A personal high would be that being a Rovers fan since a young girl and...



... as it's always been a dream to play in the blue and white quarters, to be able to represent the club I love is just an amazing feeling and something I'll never forget.

SK: How has your team's season been going and have you been happy with the campaign so far?

JLW: We've had an amazing season being unbeaten in the league with a 100% record and particular considering we all had to come together so quickly in our first season. Very disappointing with the season being declared void but we can still be very proud and come back even stronger next year.

SK: Who are your local league rivals and how have you done against them in 2019-20?

JLW: I would say either Longwell Green or Pucklechurch and we've managed to win against them both.

SK: Any rising stars, club veterans and/or stand-out personalities that our readers should know about?

JLW: We are all really rising stars with this being our first season, we are led by a superb captain [Natalie Coles] and vice captain [Libby Bell],

... and all of the girls who have come through from our Development Squad have all adjusted really well.

SK: What are your hopes for your team and/or personal aims once you can resume playing?

JLW: We would just like to regroup and go again to match or better this season. We will have the added value of an almost full season together under our belts so we will look to come on even stronger and officially secure the title this time

SK: Any football-related things you will be doing to help fill the void?

JLW: I will be trying to keep fit with road runs and home work outs along with football sessions in the garden I will also incorporate my siblings into mini football drills to keep them active and help them improve with their football and hope they follow in my footsteps.

"It's always been a dream to play in the blue and white quarters, to be able to represent the club I love is just an amazing feeling and something I'll never forget."



JESS LUMBER

Despite only turning 17 years of age back in October, Jess Lumber has taken her inaugural season in Senior Women's Football in her stride. The creative midfielder's performance in the Development Squad was rewarded with four call-ups to the first team where she continued to impress, bagging a goal and a 'Player of the Match' in the process.

We took some time out to chat to Jess about the season, life in lockdown and skateboards!

GG: Hi Jess, thanks for chatting to us today. What were your first thoughts when the news came through about the cancellation of the season??

JL: Of course initially I was disappointed seeing as both teams were doing so well in the leagues and in the cups but the safety of people is much greater and bigger than the game so all we can do now is start getting ready for the next season where we can learn and improve on from where we ended this season.

GG: What have you been doing during your time in lockdown to keep yourself busy? We've noticed the use of a skateboard on social media?

JL: I've been doing a lot of things during this lockdown period which are away from football. As you saw on Twitter, skateboarding which I loved to do especially when I was younger! I also have been letting my creative side show a lot more with drawing and painting which has really helped me during these crazy times...



... of course as well I have been doing a lot of exercise to keep my fitness up, such as going out once a day for a run or bike ride as well as football sessions by myself in the garden but I've been mixing it up as I go.

GG: Winding the clock back a little, how did it feel to be selected for Bristol Rovers after the 'Open Sessions'?

JL: It was an unreal feeling for me personally. I've been a fan of the club for as long as I can remember and always wondered why they never had a women's set up. So, when the opportunity arose I took my shot and to be picked out of so many talented girls was shocking to me and I am so happy and proud to be playing amongst such experienced and amazing players!

GG: You've had a fantastic season with the Development Squad, which was rewarded with 4 games with the first team, including a goal and a 'Player of the Match'. How would you reflect on your season and having the opportunity to play with the first team??

JL: This being my first season in adult football I couldn't be happier with how this season went. I think it wouldn't have gone as well if I didn't have such amazing coaches and team-mates which both motivated me and encouraged me throughout each training session and game.

... The team spirit is great and really allowed me to settle in and push myself. Having the opportunity to play with the first team was such a confidence booster for me. I got to play against harder teams and challenge myself to improve my game further. I think the way I play is well suited to a team that likes to keep the ball and press when we don't, so I don't think I looked out of place.

GG: You're also one of our students at the Bristol Rovers Community Trust Education, BTEC course. What has been one of your highlights so far and would you recommend the course to any girl who is finishing their GCSE's??

JL: The highlight for me was scoring in the last minute of the national finals at St. George's Park in the semi-final against Bristol City. It was a bit sad for one of my 'Gas Girls' team mates who was in goal for City (sorry Courts) but the buzz and passion I have when wearing the shirt and scoring is something else and it helped us get through to the final. I can't speak highly enough about the BTEC course. It's really interesting and the support you get from the tutors is second to none. School work never came easy to me, but I worked really hard to get my grades but looking back it was tough, being in a class of 30+.

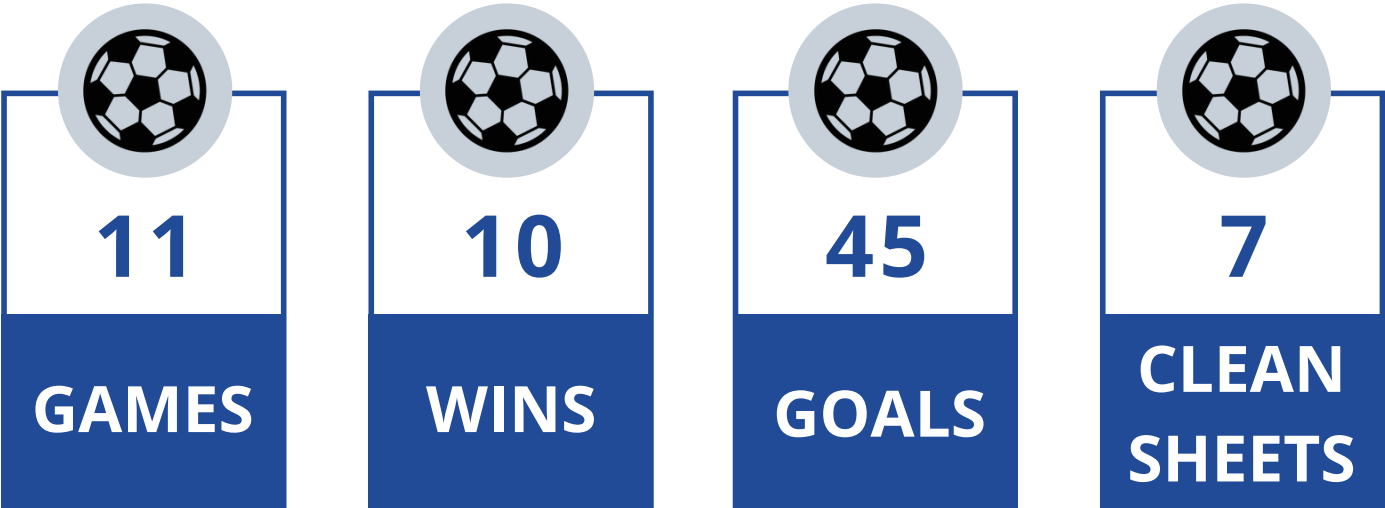
Here, the classes are smaller, everyone helps each other out and the one to one opportunity is always there if you get stuck. The futsal (soon to be football) on top is just an amazing bonus and in that environment you feel a bit like a pro training and learning everyday.

GG: What are your hopes for next season and for the club in the years to come??

JL: Stay fit, healthy and injury free. Get stronger and learn. Just work hard, keep improving and help and encourage my team mates to do likewise. Next season I hope for both teams to win the league and maybe have an unbeaten season for both teams which I think is extremely likely to happen if we continue to work hard. Over the years to come I would like us to be at a high level of competitive football with a youth set up and still have the passionate and hard-working players to show for it going forward.



DEV TEAM – KEY LEAGUE STATS



TOP SCORERS

ZOE JONES	13
ROSIE HALL	8
LOTTIE WEEKS	8

EDUCATION



**'GAS GIRLS'
IMPRESS AT
ENGLAND HQ**



Our Community Trust BTEC female students reached the final of the EFL Futsal Ladies Cup at St George's Park in February.

The annual tournament organised by the EFL Trust, welcomes clubs from across the Country to play at the multi-million pound facility at Burton upon Trent which also the home of the FA Headquarters. The girls have been performing brilliantly all season in the EFL Trust Ladies Championship, and they were looking forward to experiencing the unique opportunity of playing at such a prestigious venue.

Rovers were drawn in a tough group with Cardiff City, Northampton Town, Derby County and Rotherham United. All of these teams have been challenging at the top of the EFL Trust Ladies Championship and would provide a stern test against our Girls. Although the girls prevailed.

The girls kicked off their campaign against Derby County with a 4-1 win, followed by an emphatic 4-0 victory against Ladies Championship leaders Cardiff City. Ellie Preece and Jess Lumber were in fine form as the girls got off to a fantastic start. Northampton Town proved to be more of a tougher opponent but the...

girls picked up a 5-3 win followed by a tight 3-2 victory against Rotherham United to top the group and reach the semi-final.

We soon learnt that Rovers would be battling Bristol City for a spot in the Final. With historic rivalries renewed, a frantic and dramatic 20 minutes were upon us. City took an early lead, but a period of intensity and high pressure resulted in an equaliser for Rovers scored by Ella Stone. Rovers soon took the lead with a goal from Preece but City would continue their pressure to regain the lead and make it 3-2. With seconds remaining, Jess Lumber smashed it home to make it 3-3 and force the tie into those dreaded penalty shoot-outs. Zoe Jones, Lumber & Katie Rawlings were all accurate from the penalty spot but a City miss was enough to put Rovers in the Final.

We'd also like to wish Bristol City's goalkeeper a speedy recovery after her injury during our match. We hope that she's back on the Futsal Court very soon.

Peterborough United were our opponents in the Final, but it seemed like the dramatic and high intensity performances throughout the day may have taken its toll on our girls. Rovers fell to a 4-0 defeat after some excellent counter attacking by The Posh.

Peterborough United were our opponents in the Final, but it seemed like the dramatic and high intensity performances throughout the day may have taken its toll on our girls. Rovers fell to a 4-0 defeat after some excellent counter attacking by The Posh.

Despite the defeat and the disappointment of losing in the final, the girls enjoyed their experience, playing at one of the most famous football venues in Europe.

If you are in Year 11 and you love your football and sport, Bristol Rovers Community Trust is the place for you. Visit the Bristol Rovers Community Trust website and find out how we can help you achieve your goals.





BRISTOL ROVERS COMMUNITY TRUST

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IN SPORT (GIRLS' FOOTBALL)**



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LOTTIE WEEKS

After a lengthy break from playing 11-a-side football, Lottie Weeks successfully became a part of the 'Gas Girls' Development Team last Summer.

12 Months later and Weeks is temporarily hanging up her boots to take on the role as Assistant Coach for the first team next season. The UEFA B License student spoke to us about her new role and her first season with the 'Gas Girls'.

GG: Hi Lottie, firstly we'd like to congratulate you on your new position as Assistant Coach for the First Team. Are you looking forward to getting stuck into the new role?

LW: Thank you! Yes, I can't wait! Coaching fills a big part of my life, but not so much with the adult side of the game, so it's an exciting new challenge to get stuck into and I couldn't think of a better club to do it with!

GG: As the new position is incorporating more of a coaching role, you've taken a step back from playing for the time being. Was this a tricky decision to make?

LW: When the opportunity came along it wasn't one I could turn down. To be able to complete my UEFA B is an aim I've had for a year or so and it's great to be able to do it here. I'm obviously going to miss playing, but hopefully I can have an impact off the pitch rather than on and support the girls from the side lines. I may have to work on making sure my voice is louder than Nathan's though, which could be an impossible task!



GG: The Club may have finished it's first season, but can you see the potential that Bristol Rovers Women's has in the years to come?

LW: Most definitely. The way our first season ended wasn't ideal, but it's happened to lots of teams and we'll just use that to build on for the upcoming season. This club is full of very talented, hardworking and inspiring individuals so the only way I can see us going is up (please ignore the cheesiness of that line!). The backing we've received from so many local Gas Heads has been fantastic and that's really helped us push on. Hopefully we can continue to pack out Estadio de Leaze!

GG: And finally, what has been your highlight since you've been back playing 11 a-side for the first time in many years with Bristol Rovers?

LW: Being back part of a team has been brilliant and it's been even more enjoyable because of the results we were getting on the pitch. One of the reasons I started playing again was to hopefully inspire some of the girls I coach through work and if I've done that with just one, then I'll be delighted. I'm extremely proud to pull that shirt on, just like the other girls are, and it's had a massive impact on many of us this season. Here's to many more years!!

"This club is full of very talented, hardworking and inspiring individuals so the only way I can see us going is up"



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BRISTOL ROVERS SUPPORTERS CLUB

Without the support and the backing from our sponsors, making an impact in our community becomes incredibly difficult. Every penny that comes into the club is re-invested into providing football for women and girls within the local area. Whether it's facilitating free football sessions for girls or improving our infrastructure, every penny makes a massive difference in our community.

When the re-launch of the 'Gas Girls' was announced, Bristol Rovers Supporters Club were instantly willing to help and have continued to be incredibly supportive during our first season. We spoke to David Thomas who has attended virtually every match this season and has a keen interest in our progress.

GG: Hi Dave. I suppose the first thing to address is the cancellation of the League with the whole season being null & void. What were your first thoughts when you heard the news?

DT: Although the news wasn't entirely unexpected it still felt like a bolt from the blue. I was expecting to hear of an indefinite postponement but declaring the whole season null and void seemed awfully harsh especially as the season could be finished in eight weeks which is exactly the same time frame the EFL have given themselves with their 56 day intentions. But I am just a fan. I feel for everyone who has represented the club so magnificently this season, to be just one win from securing the league title in their inaugural season is a tremendous feat and every single one of our girls...

...has lost out on one or maybe two medals which they thoroughly deserved. I also feel for Nathan, Abbie and Mavis who have set the club up, planned everything and coached the girls so well; to have to do it all again next season must be a very bitter pill to swallow.

But having said all this, everyone is safe and in a position to go again next season and that is more important than the result of any football match.

GG: As Secretary for the Bristol Rovers Supporters Club and a massive supporter of the newly launched Gas Girls programme, what have you enjoyed about the new partnership with the Club?



Once the Supporters Club had agreed to sponsor the project I felt it was important that we were seen to be the sort of sponsor that doesn't just hand the money over and fade into the background. Bristol Rovers Womens' FC paid us the huge honour of putting our logo on the first team's home shirts and I was determined to repay that. I was extremely fortunate that the girls play their home matches at Lockleaze Sports Centre which is actually walking distance from my home. It has been fascinating to be in at the start of a project and watching it grow and evolve. I have made friendships through being involved with the project and have forged excellent relationships with a lot of the girls who are all first-rate ambassadors for the club.

GG: It's safe to say that the support and sponsorship from the BRSC has been instrumental in the running of the Club from day one. Why do you feel that the members wanted to support the Gas Girls from the off?

DT: The Supporters Club already sponsor our Academy and Development Squads and when Ken Masters came to one of our committee meetings and informed us that the womens' club was being set up and would we be prepared to sponsor it, the answer was easy. Through Ken we get to hear a lot about the fantastic work of the Community Trust and have a huge respect for Adam and his whole team.

The original brand of the "Gas Girls" were held in great affection by all Rovers fans and seeing them start again seemed like a massive wrong being put right.

GG: The Club may be in its infancy but there's an obvious determination to grow this Club as far as it can. Can you see the potential and the possible progress that can be made in the season to come?

DT: It was a real race against time last summer to hold trials, select squads and put a couple of teams together in time for the big kick-off. There simply wasn't time to plan for the club and I believe there is huge potential for the club to grow, the sky really is the limit. The women's game in this country has come an awful long way and a lot of football fans were hooked on the World Cup last summer and with the Euro Finals heading to England 2022 we could be approaching the golden age for women's football.

Progress through the leagues is vital especially for our first team but it is also important that our Development side players have a clear pathway into the first team; a healthy number of them had run-outs in the first team this season and I think I am right in saying that none of them let anyone down. Adding age group sides is also important and giving them a pathway into our Development squad would only strengthen the club.



An additional bonus would be that this would aid recruitment onto the Community Trust's BTEC programmes which benefits all of us. I feel we also need to do some work in finding out who comes to support our girls on the wind-swept roof at Lockleaze. I must admit I know who some of them are but certainly not all of them. How can we encourage more people to come and watch? Well better weather of course would help - it must be drier next season. Setting up a Gas Girls Supporters Club/ Group could help (free to join). Having the ability to mail them newsletters and match-day programmes and Rich's excellent photos may make them feel more connected and more likely to come and watch.

GG: And finally, what has been your main highlight of the season?

DT: You've certainly saved the hardest question until the last! There have been so many highlights to pick just one. The game at Merthyr is certainly one. Seeing the dream and all the planning turn into reality was quite something. I had picked a couple of the girls out at the trials and seeing them both start at Merthyr was very pleasing. After all these years watching football it seems I did know something about football after all! The girls desire to be part of Bristol Rovers has been pleasing to see too; their support of our quiz nights has been very much appreciated.

On the pitch the 95th minute winner against Longwell Green has to be the highlight; I had never given up hope that day but as a Rovers fan you learn to live on hope. Some of the football has been an absolute pleasure to watch; some great goals have been scored both individual efforts and team goals. Watching Rosanna on the ball has been a delight but I don't like to single any of them out, they have all contributed. Seeing the progress Shannon has made, both as a footballer and as a person has been a real highlight and underlines what the Community Trust is all about.

"I have made friendships through being involved with the project and have forged excellent relationships with a lot of the girls who are all first-rate ambassadors for the club"

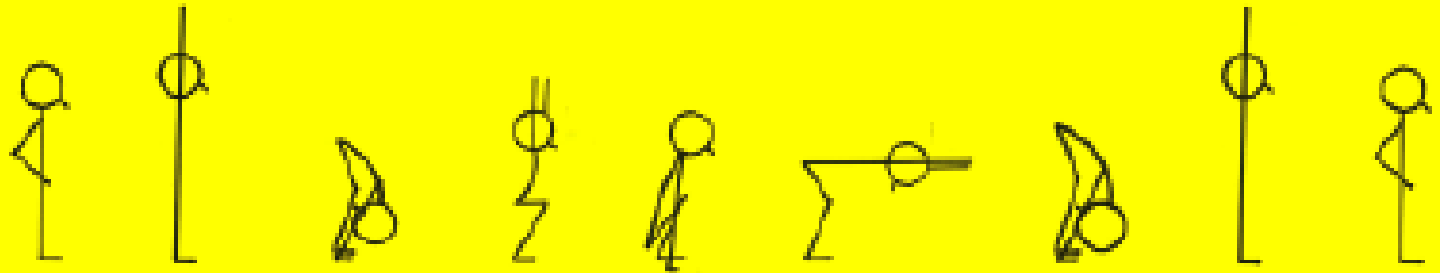




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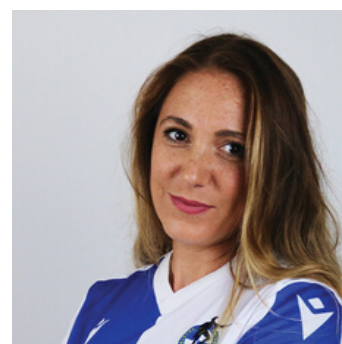
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